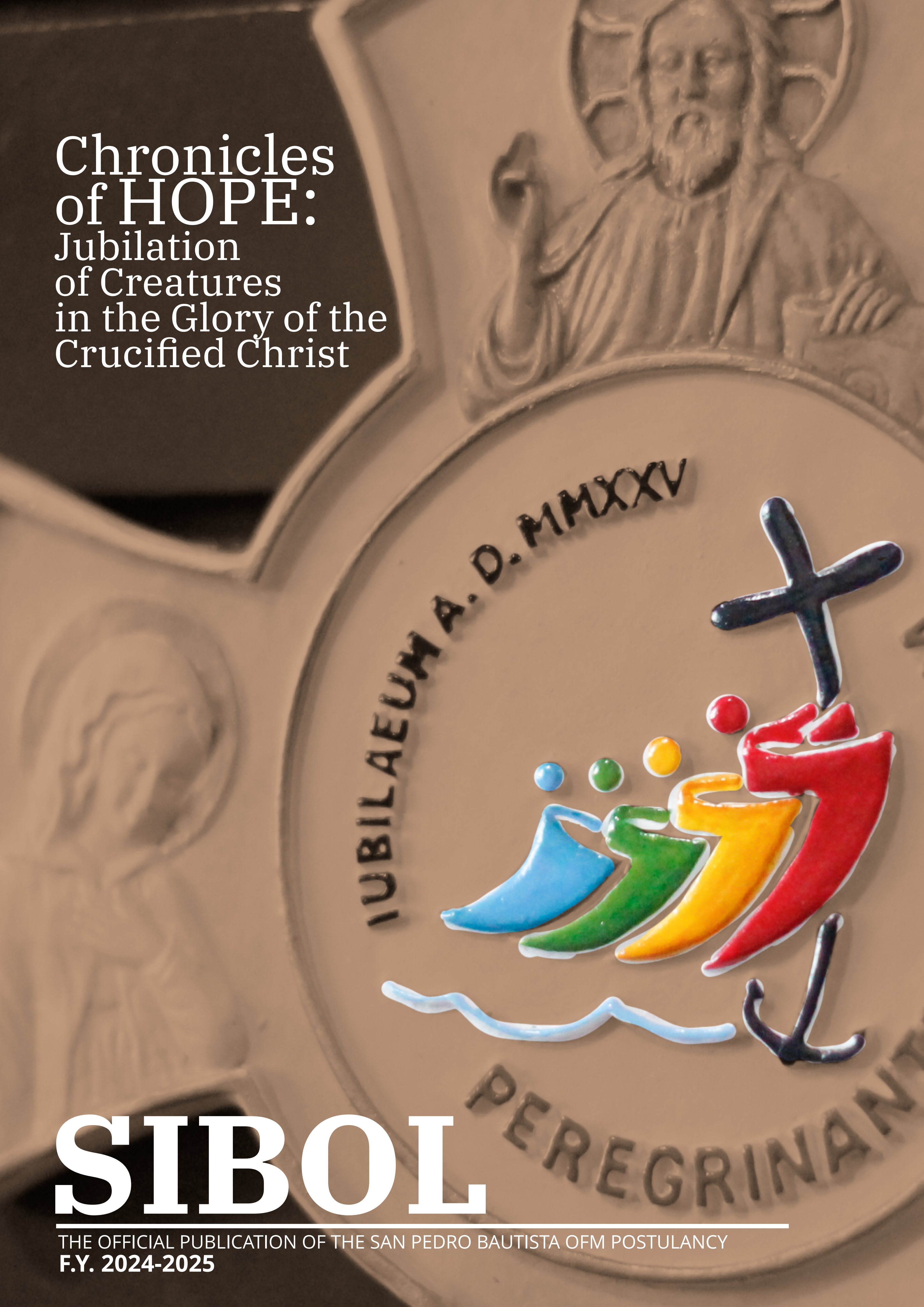
IUBILAEUM A.D. MMXXV
PEREGRINANT

Chronicles of HOPE:

Jubilation of Creatures in the Glory of the Crucified Christ

SIBOL
THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SAN PEDRO BAUTISTA OFM POSTULANCY
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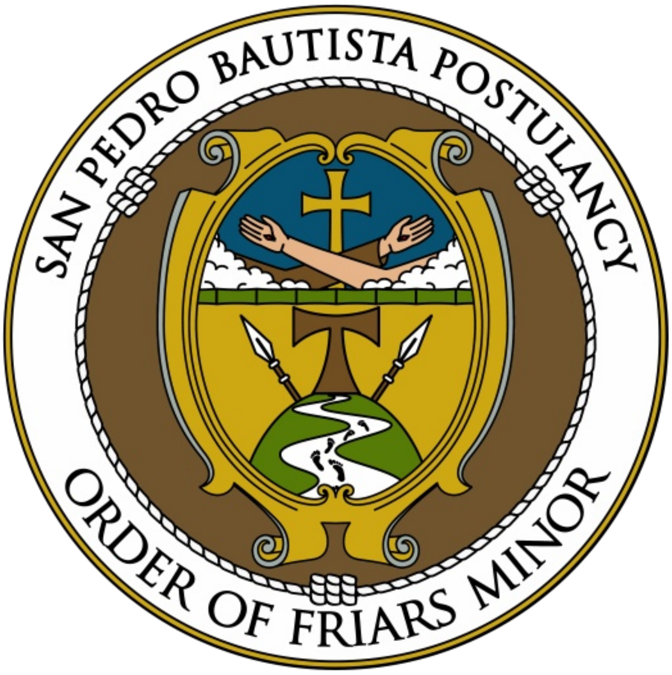
About the Cover

The Jubilee logo features four stylized figures from the four corners of the earth embracing each other, symbolizing global unity, solidarity, and shared faith. The lead figure holds a cross that extends downward into an anchor, representing enduring hope and stability amid life's turbulent challenges. This powerful image reflects a communal journey of faith, guided by the cross and anchored in hope, in line with the Jubilee motto: Peregrinantes in Spem (Pilgrims in Hope). Echoing this call, we postulants aspire to become pilgrims of hope, sharing our stories to inspire others who struggle, and choosing to focus on what truly matters—faith, hope, and love.

The Postulancy Logo



This logo integrates rich symbolism to reflect the Franciscan spirit and spiritual journey. Encircling the design is a three-knotted cord signifying the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Within the cord, the Franciscan coat of arms features intertwined hands of St. Francis and Christ, symbolizing brotherhood and divine connection. Bamboo elements emphasize resilience and sustainability, representing growth and enduring faith. Central to the logo is a path leading upward toward a tau cross atop a mountain, symbolizing the ongoing journey toward heaven—a call to continually start anew, echoing St. Francis's teachings. The mountain signifies life's triumphs and the ascent toward the heavenly City of God, also referencing the San Pedro Bautista Postulancy House's hilltop location. Footprints along the path illustrate the postulants' formation and discernment journey, highlighting community support and accompaniment. Two spears can also be seen, representing martyrdom, bravery, and missionary work, inspired by the iconography of St. Peter Baptist and companions. The gold coat reflects divine glory and protection, while the brown color echoes the Franciscan habit, conveying humility and simplicity. Overall, the logo embodies faith, perseverance, humility, and mission, capturing the essence of the Franciscan charism and the spiritual path of its members.

Messages

From the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

Sing songs of praise to the crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ! This is the mantra of this year's publication, inspired by Pope Francis' declaration of the Jubilee Year 2025: Pilgrims of Hope.

As postulants, we are called to encounter God through human formation—especially in the shaping of our emotions, the deepening of our knowledge, and the honest reflection on ourselves in relation to others. This publication reflects that journey. It is a collection of our stories, our experiences, and our hopes as pilgrims walking in the light of the crucified Christ and in love for all creation.

This year also marks two significant celebrations in the Franciscan family: the 8th centenary of the stigmatization of St. Francis and the 8th centenary of his Canticle of the Creatures, his song of praise to God through all elements of creation. With this in mind, we invite you, dear reader, to enter into these chronicles of hope—hope that persists amid sorrow, trials, and spiritual dryness.

May you find in these pages, strength, inspiration, and a renewed sense of thanksgiving for God's gifts revealed through our families, friends, our common home, the Earth, and all of creation.

Fraternally,
Br. Renz Adrian G. Ronda
Editor-in-Chief | SIBOL

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From the Master of Postulants

As we conclude this postulancy year, we thank the Lord for His loving presence and providential guidance, which have allowed us to be formed, renewed, and healed together through His unfailing grace—despite our imperfections and shared challenges. Yes, we made it, brothers—but this is not the end. It is only the beginning of our journey.

The Franciscan postulancy formation is not merely a phase but a pilgrimage—a journey of faith, transformation, and deep trust in God. This path is best exemplified by St. Francis of Assisi, who walked as a true Pilgrim of Hope, embracing the unknown with unwavering faith, humility, and joy. He left behind worldly security and entrusted himself entirely to God's providence.

St. Francis reminds us that hope is not passive. It is an active, courageous choice—to trust in God's will and become instruments of His peace. Being agents of hope means walking together in faith, just as St. Francis walked alongside the poor, the lepers, andthose forgotten by society. He saw Christ in others and uplifted them with his presence, his words, and his service. His greeting, Pax et Bonum (Peace and All Good), was more than a salutation—it was a mission: to spread the joy of the Gospel wherever he went.

As postulants, you have lived this spirit of fraternity—encouraging one another in times of struggle and rejoicing in each other's growth. I hope this year's SIBOL publication captures the many glimpses of hope you have shared as one fraternity. Let us continue as Pilgrims of Hope, lifting one another up, embracing God's call with joy, and sharing His love with the anawim—the lowly and forgotten.

Like St. Francis, may we live simply, love fully, and trust completely in the Poor and Crucified Christ, the source of Francis' hope and the guide of our every step and journey.

Fraternally,
Br. Fernando Radin, Jr., OFM
Master of the Postulants

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Jubilee of Hope: Pilgrims of Hope in Our Journey with Christ

Br. Jonathan Ng Zong Jian

In 2025, Pope Francis has declared this year the Jubilee of Hope, celebrating the contributions of various groups to the Church, particularly those who desperately cling to hope in their lives. His Holiness calls on us, as Catholic Christians, to participate in this Jubilee of Hope in a special way—as "Pilgrims of Hope." This invitation encourages us to rediscover our identity as pilgrims on this earth and to continue our journey toward hope, bearing witness to that hope for all to see.

To be a pilgrim is to intentionally leave behind the comfort and familiarity of where we currently find ourselves, and journey toward a "special" place, often one of discovery or searching, frequently into the unknown. This pilgrimage is not just a physical movement but also a spiritual one, as we seek to deepen our relationship with God and live out our calling as witnesses of hope.

But what exactly is hope? The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), in paragraphs 1817 and 1818, defines hope as "the desire for the kingdom of heaven and eternal life… placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit." This definition offers us a profound understanding of hope: it is the act of trusting in God's promises, even when the path before us is unclear. It invites us to move away from the familiar ground of sin and step into the paradise of God's mercy, where we rely on His guidance and trust in His never-failing presence.

A common question that arises when we consider hope is, "How do I trust God? He seems so far away, and how does He understand me?" To answer this, we look toward the feast of Christmas and the celebration of Santo Niño, where Christ, the Savior of the world, was born as a vulnerable baby in a manger. Christ, fully divine and fully human, understands us completely. As He grew, He experienced the restlessness of heart, the frailty of the body, and the anxieties of the mind that we all face. During His Passion, He endured the physical and mental agony of scourging, crucifixion, and humiliation, feeling the weight of rejection and pain. Christ could have come in glory as an adult man to avoid all suffering, but He chose to enter into our human experience fully. In doing so, He experienced our heartaches, our failures, and our shame. How, then, can we continue to say that God doesn't understand us?

The CCC teaches us that hope is about trusting in Christ's promises. Throughout the Scripture, God reassures us that He will never leave or forsake us (Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5). However, even if we can understand that Christ, through His incarnation, knows us deeply, we may still feel that God is distant. If God is far from us, how then can we trust in His promise to be with us? St. Augustine offers us an answer: "The Lord is closer to us than we are to ourselves." When we truly believe that God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves, the words of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew, "I am with you always, to the end of time," take on a profound meaning. In this closeness, we can find certain hope, trusting that God is leading us as pilgrims.

One example of a pilgrim of hope is St. Pedro Bautista, whose feast we celebrate on February 6. St. Pedro, a missionary and martyr, left the comfort of his home and journeyed to distant lands to spread the Gospel. Throughout his mission, he kept his eyes fixed on Christ, trusting in His promises every step of the way—even as he faced martyrdom. The hope St. Pedro had in God was so certain that it propelled him to love—not just the people he ministered to, but even those who caused him harm. His love was rooted in God, who is perfect Charity.

As we reflect on the Jubilee of Hope and our call to be Pilgrims of Hope, let us commit ourselves to journeying with Christ, relying not on our own strength, but trusting in His promises. In His nearness, He never forsakes us, and through this certain hope, we are empowered to love as He loves, with perfect Charity. Let this year be a time of renewed commitment to our pilgrimage, as we trust in God's guidance and become witnesses of hope for the world.

A List of Reasons for Hope

Br. Alfiyando Syahnafi

During a Mass, I once heard the Gospel reading from Luke 6:17, 20-26. This passage reinforces Pope Francis' call—especially in this Jubilee Year of Hope—to know the face of God's mercy, Jesus Christ Incarnate, and to reflect that mercy to our neighbors, including even our enemies. To embody this mercy, we are called to take concrete action. San Pedro Bautista Parish invites us to do so in five specific ways, the last of which is to create a list of reasons for hope.

Before sharing my reflection, I invite readers to first review the definition of hope from various sources. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength but on the grace of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1817). Hope responds to the longing for happiness that God has placed in every human heart, sustaining us during difficult times, keeping us from discouragement, and directing our desires toward the Kingdom of Heaven (CCC 1818). St. Thomas Aquinas further clarifies that hope is a theological virtue in which we pursue a possible good by relying on God's strength and assistance (ST II-II, Q. 7, A.1 & 5).

In light of these definitions, I reflect on why Pope Francis and the Church continually invite us to hope. First, the world around us is still imperfect, and there are aspects of our lives that remain incomplete. If everything were already perfect, there would be no need for hope, would there? Second, hope arises because we have faith—faith that our struggles, imperfections, and sufferings can be transformed and perfected according to God's will. We trust that, one day, all suffering will cease and all that is broken will be restored. Thus, when the Church encourages us to write a list of reasons for hope, she is also inviting us to first recognize the imperfections in our lives and in the world—things that still have the potential to be perfected. From there, we can identify our hopes and reflect on how we can act to bring them to fulfillment.

Here lies an important aspect of hope: it does not lead to passivity. Since its foundation is divine strength and assistance, hope calls us to cooperate with God in bringing about what we long for. Hope propels us into action, not complacency. When we recognize what we are hoping for, we are inspired to work toward it with God's help rather than relying solely on our own efforts. Hope without action—without collaboration with God—remains mere expectation, a human desire that can sometimes be selfish or misguided. Expectations can lead to disappointment when they are not met, but true hope, rooted in trust in God, does not lead to disillusionment. Instead, it brings freedom, for when we surrender everything to His will, we experience peace.

In Luke 6:17, 20-26, Jesus delivers His sermon on the Beatitudes. Matthew's Gospel expands upon these teachings, listing them as the Eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10), which we recognize in Catholic tradition. What is striking is how the Beatitudes seem to contradict the realities of life. How can one be blessed when facing the trials of poverty, mourning, hunger, thirst, or persecution? From a purely human perspective, these experiences surely bring sorrow, suffering, and hardship. However, Jesus subtly invites us to continue hoping even in the midst of hardships.

When we face life's difficulties, Jesus acknowledges our struggles and allows us to express our pain. However, He also calls us not to remain trapped in negativity but to place our hope in God. When we are poor in spirit, we are reminded that the Holy Spirit is our true source of wealth. In times of mourning, we remember that God is our ultimate comforter. When we suffer from hunger and thirst, we realize that Jesus Himself is the Bread of Life and the Living Water that can satisfy us. Through our struggles and imperfections, we come to understand that only in God can we find true refuge, hope, and the promise of a better future.

With this in mind, I invite you all to take a moment to reflect. What are the imperfections in your life and in the world that still hold the potential for transformation? What are the moments of suffering that can lead you closer to God? Take some time to write your own list of reasons for hope.

As an example, earlier last February, I began my list of reasons for hope with: “I hope that tomorrow I can pray my individual Rosary.” I started with this because I realized that I had been neglecting my personal Rosary prayer, and I hoped to correct this by becoming more diligent and consistent in praying the daily Rosary. I began with one item on my list and added another each day, praying over them and taking concrete action to realize them with God’s intervention. I found that practicing this exercise—writing a list of reasons for hope—is profoundly beneficial. It can be an exercise in faith—an acknowledgment that, despite the hardships we encounter, we believe in a God who redeems, restores, and fulfills His promises in His perfect time.

In closing, remember that hope is a journey we undertake with God. By identifying our reasons for hope and acting upon them, we open ourselves to His transformative grace. I hope that in this special Jubilee Year 2025, through this practice, God will transform us into our better selves and draw us ever closer to Him, day by day.

God bless us all! Pax et Bonum!

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The Journey of Hope as Little Brothers

Br. Ralph Harvey Malaga

As Franciscans, our calling is to live out the Gospel by embracing humility, simplicity, and service to others, especially the poor. The Journey of Hope as Little Brothers remind us of the Franciscan values that guide our lives—values that encourage us to bring peace and hope, particularly to those who need it most. The term Fratelli Minori (Little Brothers) holds deep significance in the Franciscan tradition because it teaches us to walk humbly with others, not as heroes, but as brothers on a shared journey. This journey is about making Christ's love visible in practical ways—by being present, sharing in struggles, and offering hope to one another.

St. Francis of Assisi, our founder, called us "Little Brothers" to remind us of Jesus' humility. He teaches us to treat everyone with respect, recognizing that we are all equal in the eyes of God. Being a Little Brother means understanding that our worth does not come from wealth, status, or achievements, but from how we love and serve others. This is the true spirit of hope—hope that is not rooted in material success but in trusting in God's providence and the promise of salvation.

The Journey of Hope challenges us to move beyond our personal desires and comforts, drawing us toward those who are suffering or marginalized in society. In the Franciscan tradition, poverty is not merely about lacking material possessions or living simply—it is about standing in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. We are called to see Christ in the suffering of others and to respond with love and acts of kindness. Every step of this journey offers an opportunity to reflect on how, as Little Brothers, we can bring peace, hope, and healing to a world that often feels fractured and divided.

In the Franciscan way, hope is not a passive sentiment—it is something we actively live out. It compels us to work for justice, peace, and understanding. As Little Brothers, our journey reminds us that we are never alone. While we walk alongside others in their struggles, God's grace sustains us, giving us the strength to persevere. The hope we share is not merely spoken—it is lived through our daily witness to the Gospel. It calls us to embrace the brokenness of the world and transform it through love and service.

This journey also deepens our understanding of fraternity. St. Francis knew that no one is meant to walk alone. The Journey of Hope strengthens through the relationships we build, particularly with those who share our commitment to serving and living the Gospel. As Little Brothers, we witness firsthand how community can transform us—how it nurtures hope, sustains us through challenges, and empowers us to continue our mission, even in difficult times.

In the end, The Journey of Hope as Little Brothers is an invitation to bring light to a world longing for hope. It calls us to embody the Franciscan way of humility, simplicity, and deep compassion. As we walk together as brothers and companions, we do not merely offer hope to others—we are also transformed ourselves, growing ever closer to Christ, the true source of all hope.

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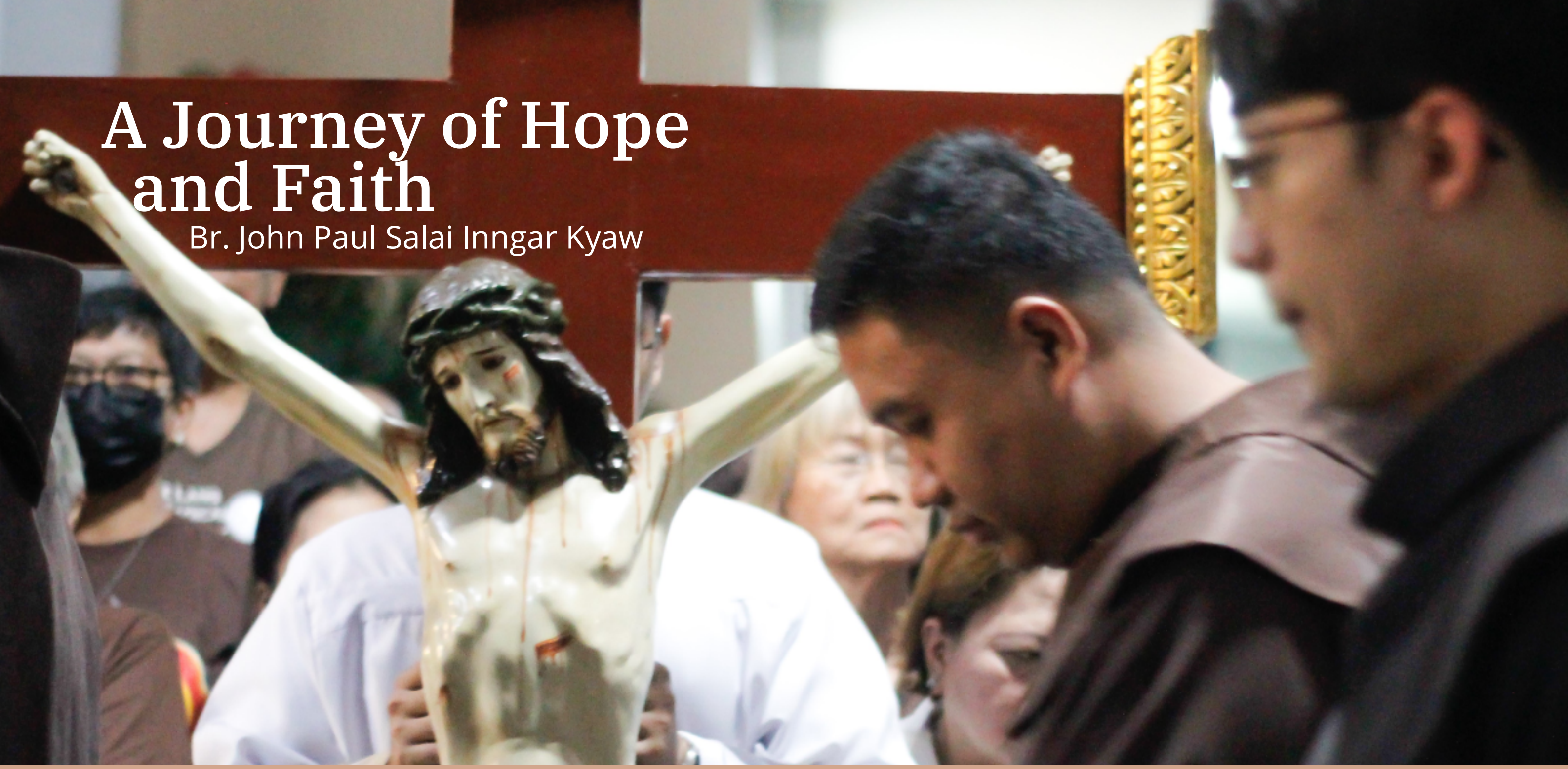
A Journey of Hope and Faith

Br. John Paul Salai Inngar Kyaw



Before I truly understood that God blesses us with help, understanding, and salvation, I lived a carefree, self-centered life. During that time, I craved attention from others and hoped to become wealthy. I failed to realize that my desires were leading me astray. In my pursuit of selfish ambitions, I unknowingly sought things that were not aligned with God's will. For three years, I neglected God, and my negative thoughts reflected this distance from Him. During that period, I felt hopeless because I did not turn to God for strength or guidance.

I remember a time in my youth when I prayed earnestly every day. Passing the 10th-grade exam seemed crucial to my future, and I hoped that God would help me succeed. However, I did not pass. This failure led me to question my faith, and gradually, my belief in God began to fade. But God, who knew me intimately from the beginning, used the challenges I faced to restore my faith. I began to understand that the more I distanced myself from God, the more difficult my life became.

God's calling, I have learned, is mysterious. At the time, I never imagined that I would one day serve Him. Throughout my life, my desire to follow God has fluctuated, often influenced by my worldly desires. As I mentioned, money had become like a second god to me, and my faith was not as strong or complete as it is now.

One day, after hearing a monk's teachings, I had an epiphany. I realized that for so long, I had been focused on taking from others and had forgotten the importance of giving. I had hoped to receive from God but had failed to give back in return. This realization led me to change. I began to make an effort to get closer to God by attending church regularly. As I grew in my faith, I noticed that my hope expanded, my self-esteem increased, and I started to trust God more deeply.

Music also played a significant role in drawing me closer to God. I have always had a passion for music, and playing instruments has brought me immense joy. Over time, I felt this joy deepen as I grew in my relationship with God. One day, I prayed that I could live a life filled with happiness and peace, with music and faith at the center of it. Eventually, I began to sense a growing desire to serve God, even though I knew it would come with its own challenges.

As I continued on this journey, I began to realize that God was leading me closer to Him, blessing me in ways I hadn't imagined. His help was shaping me into a holier person, one who could face life's difficulties with a renewed sense of hope. Now, even when life is difficult, I believe I can overcome anything because I have hope and strong goals for the future. Even when God doesn't provide what I want immediately, I trust that He will provide at the right time, and that hope continues to sustain me.

This hope is not passive—it is an active force that keeps me moving forward in my vocation. It enables me to forgive, endure struggles, and resist temptations. It is through this hope that I find strength, and I am confident that with God's help, I will continue to grow in faith, live out my calling, and fulfill the purpose He has set before me.

The Need for Visionary Leadership and Education Reform in Myanmar

Br. David Pau Sian Muan

Today's young adults face an array of challenges and uncertainties. Many struggle to identify their purpose and fully develop their talents. In this context, there is an urgent need for visionary leaders who can inspire, guide, and empower the youth to reach their full potential.

My deep concern for my home country, Myanmar, stems from the fact that it ranks among the lowest in global education rankings. The limited opportunities and inadequate education system contribute to a sense of aimlessness and stagnation among many young people. Education should not only equip individuals with knowledge but also foster personal growth and well-being. Unfortunately, the lack of sufficient support from the government exacerbates the situation, leaving many without the resources and guidance they need to thrive.

A Myanmar bishop once remarked, "We need a good shepherd." This statement encapsulates the crucial need for compassionate and effective leaders who can guide our nation, communities, and organizations. Reflecting on my own experiences, I am reminded of a family I knew in my childhood, who lived in poverty. Despite their challenging circumstances, the eldest siblings selflessly sacrificed their education to support their younger brothers and sisters. This act of kindness and responsibility demonstrated leadership that transcended formal education, highlighting the power of selflessness and resilience.

The story of this individual underscores the deficiencies of our education system and the failure of government support. However, it also speaks to the extraordinary qualities of leadership, empathy, and sacrifice that can emerge in the face of adversity. Every person has unique skills, talents, and passions, yet often, circumstances prevent these from being fully realized. It is crucial for us to recognize that we are the beacons of hope for the next generation.

As I often say, "We are born to live, not to prepare to die." This statement reflects my belief that every individual has a purpose, and it is our responsibility to help others discover and fulfill theirs. Looking toward the future, I hope that Myanmar will nurture more leaders like this unsung hero—individuals who demonstrate selfless service and integrity. I remain optimistic that our country will find its "good shepherd" and a government that genuinely prioritizes the well-being of its citizens.

I envision a future where excellent schools, dedicated teachers, and compassionate leaders create an environment where the next generation can flourish. This year, let us unite to illuminate the darkness of uncertainty and bring hope to our beloved country. By working together, we can lay the foundation for a brighter, more prosperous future for all.

Hope in Forgiveness: Embracing Mercy and Renewal

Br. Maximillian Alexson

Forgiveness is at the heart of Christian life, offering a path to healing, renewal, and reconciliation. As the Church celebrates the Jubilee of Hope, it is essential to reflect on the power of forgiveness as a transformative force that restores relationships, lifts burdens, and opens the door to new beginnings. The words of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew emphasize the necessity of this virtue:

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

This passage highlights the reciprocal nature of divine mercy, teaching that those who seek God's forgiveness must also extend forgiveness to others. Yet, the reality of forgiveness is often challenging. Many struggle to let go the pain of betrayal, particularly when it is inflicted by those closest to them. The reluctance to forgive can create an emotional and spiritual burden that stifles inner peace. However, the act of forgiveness is not merely an obligation but a path toward true liberation. Saint Francis of Assisi, in his well-known prayer, captures the Christian call to mercy: "Where there is hatred, let me sow love." These words remind the faithful that forgiveness is an invitation to transcend pain and choose love over resentment.

Forgiveness is more than a kind gesture; it is a transformation of the heart. When one clings to resentment, wounds remain open, preventing the possibility of true healing. By contrast, to forgive is to embrace the hope of renewal, allowing grace to mend what has been broken. True forgiveness does not dismiss wrongdoing or negate the necessity of justice. Instead, it is a conscious decision to release anger and choose peace. This sacred act reflects Christ's ultimate expression of mercy on the cross when He prayed for those who crucified Him: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). His words, spoken in the midst of suffering, reveal the boundless depths of divine love and serve as an enduring example for all who struggle with the call to forgive.

For those burdened by guilt, divine mercy offers the ultimate source of hope. Christian teaching affirms that no sin is beyond God's forgiveness, and His grace is always available to those who seek it with sincerity. The words of Christ to Saint Faustina, recorded in her Diary of Divine Mercy, convey this profound truth: "The greater the sinner, the greater

the right he has to My mercy." This assurance is central to the Jubilee of Hope, reminding believers that renewal is always possible. No past mistake is too great for the mercy of God, and no soul is beyond redemption. The promise of forgiveness extends to all who humbly turn to the Lord, confident that His love triumphs over every failing.

The act of forgiveness is not only a personal necessity but also a means of restoring relationships. In a world where divisions and conflicts often seem insurmountable, forgiveness serves as the bridge that reconnects estranged hearts. Reconciliation does not always mean that relationships will return to their original state, but it allows those involved to move forward without the burden of resentment. The Lord's Prayer itself affirms this reality: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" (Matthew 6:12). Forgiveness is not contingent upon the actions of others but is a decision to entrust justice to God and to seek personal peace. In this way, the faithful participate in the unfolding work of redemption, mirroring the mercy that God so freely offers.

Among the most difficult forms of forgiveness is self-forgiveness. Many struggle with the weight of past mistakes, believing themselves unworthy of a fresh start. The tendency to dwell on past failures can lead to despair, yet Christian faith proclaims a different truth: human worth is not defined by failures but by the grace of God. The life of Saint Paul serves as a striking example of this reality. Once a fierce persecutor of Christians, he encountered Christ and became one of the Church's greatest evangelists. His transformation is a testament to the limitless power of divine mercy, demonstrating that even the most hardened hearts can be renewed. The Jubilee of Hope invites all to embrace this truth, trusting that God's grace is greater than any sin.

A Journey of Hope: Trusting in God's Call

Br. John Thang Kap Tuang

Joining the Franciscan seminary meant leaving my family and stepping into an unfamiliar world. Saying goodbye was painful, especially to someone dear to me. Yet, I let go—not out of rejection, but out of obedience to God's call. Though difficult, I trusted that His plan was greater than my own.

Adapting to seminary life was challenging. I struggled with community living, meditation, and deep reflection. But over time, these shaped me, drawing me closer to God and granting me peace. After three years, I was given the opportunity to discern further in the Philippines. Though honored, I faced cultural and language barriers that tested my resolve. At times, I doubted my vocation, but God's grace sustained me.

Unexpectedly, I developed feelings for someone I met. Her presence brought me joy, but I knew our paths were not meant to align. Saying goodbye was painful, yet necessary. In surrendering to God's will, I found freedom.

The Jubilee Year of Hope reminds us that hope is not passive longing but trust in God's divine plan. Through challenges and uncertainties, His love remains constant—guiding, shielding, and shaping us. As I continue this journey, I hold firm to His promise, knowing He will never abandon me.

May we embrace this year with renewed faith, trusting in the One who calls us.

Political Crisis in Myanmar: A Journey of Hope

Br. Charles Ko Ko Myint

The history of Christianity in Myanmar dates back to the early 16th century when Portuguese missionaries arrived in 1511. Over time, the Catholic Church grew significantly, and by the 19th and 20th centuries, missionaries played a vital role in the country's social and educational development. Before 1962, Catholic institutions, particularly schools and hospitals, were widely recognized for their discipline and excellence in education. These institutions shaped countless lives and contributed immensely to the nation's welfare. However, in 1961, Prime Minister U Nu declared Buddhism the national religion, a decision that forced foreign missionaries to leave the country, disrupting their mission of service. Despite these challenges, the Church remained steadfast in nurturing faith and hope, even in times of adversity.

In February 2021, Myanmar faced yet another crisis when the military seized power, overthrowing the elected democratic government and arresting its leaders. The coup ignited widespread violence, persecution, and suffering throughout the country. Catholic regions, in particular, bore severe consequences—churches were destroyed by airstrikes, villages were bombed and burned, and entire communities were displaced. Priests, nuns, and religious congregations were forced to flee their convents, seeking refuge in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps alongside innocent war victims. Yet, despite the ruins of sacred spaces, the faith of the people remained unshaken.

The military also directly targeted clergy and religious members. Two Catholic priests were arrested on accusations of supporting the People's Defense Forces, while a diocesan priest was brutally killed while faithfully serving his mission. Some religious leaders were forced into exile, creating fear and uncertainty among the faithful. Many foreign missionaries had to leave Myanmar for their safety, and even the bishops of Myanmar—key leaders of the Church—struggled to provide protection and support to their people. The political crisis has caused unimaginable suffering, but it has also revealed the resilience of Myanmar's people. Despite losing their homes, churches, and loved ones, many continue to hold on to their faith. Though weakened, the Church remains a source of hope, offering spiritual and material support to those displaced by war.

The "Jubilee Year of Hope" in 2025 carries a profound message for Myanmar in these difficult times. Pilgrims of hope are those who journey forward with faith and perseverance, even when the future is uncertain. For Myanmar, this journey means striving for peace, justice, and freedom, no matter how difficult the path may be. Hope is evident in the courage of young people resisting oppression, the solidarity of communities helping one another, and the quiet prayers of the faithful around the world. Generous donors from foreign countries continue to provide food, education, and shelter to those in need, proving that even the smallest acts of kindness can shine a light in the darkest of times.

Yet, maintaining hope is not easy. The fear of arrest, the loss of loved ones, and the uncertainty of the future weigh heavily on everyone. The journey is filled with struggles and obstacles, but it is in these moments of despair that hope becomes most meaningful. Hope is found in unity, faith, and the unwavering belief in a better future. Moving forward, the people of Myanmar must remain steadfast, drawing strength from their shared traditions and values as a foundation for healing and rebuilding. We continue to hope that the international community will sustain its support through advocacy and humanitarian aid.

In conclusion, Myanmar's political crisis has brought immense suffering, yet the "Jubilee Year of Hope" reminds us that even in the darkest of journeys, hope remains our guiding light. Through resilience, unity, and perseverance, the people of Myanmar can continue to walk toward peace and freedom, carrying faith and hope in their hearts. God hears every prayer, and no prayer is ever wasted. We must keep trusting and praying with fervent hope for righteousness and liberation.

Let us persevere with patience, trusting in God's divine plan and finding joy even in our suffering. With unwavering faith, we pray for the transformation of the hearts and minds of the military junta, that they may turn away from violence, oppression, and greed. May God grant wisdom to the leaders of the armed forces, guiding them toward genuine peace, free from self-interest and malice. Through faith, trust, prayer, and hope, we believe that God will liberate us in His perfect time.

Human Sexuality Class for the Future Minister

Br. Jewel Ysmile De Leon

When people think of seminary life, they often imagine an environment filled with prayer, study, and preparation for the priesthood. It is easy to envision a life centered on God and spiritual guidance. However, what is often overlooked is the reality that seminarians, like all human beings, experience struggles, including those related to human sexuality. As part of seminary formation, we engage in a deep and honest exploration of human sexuality, an essential component of our Sojourn class. This module is not merely academic; it is a critical part of our journey toward becoming responsible, compassionate, and self-aware ministers. Given the alarming rise in reports of abuse within the Church, it has become even more imperative for future Church leaders to confront these issues with sincerity and commitment, ensuring that the priesthood remains a source of healing and hope rather than harm.

Among the various topics covered in our Sojourn classes, human sexuality stands out as one of the most thought-provoking and transformative. This course is not simply about biological facts or scientific explanations—though those are certainly included—but about understanding human relationships, emotions, and the complex ways in which people experience love and attraction. It compels us to reflect on what it means to connect with others, to recognize our own struggles, and to acknowledge the challenges people face in reconciling their faith with their personal experiences. The course does not shy away from difficult topics such as addiction, relational conflicts, and abuse. Instead, it encourages open discussions that help us develop a pastoral sensitivity that will be essential in our future ministry.

As seminarians preparing for the priesthood, we are called to guide and support the people in our communities. However, how can we truly help them if we do not understand their struggles? How can we offer meaningful support if we fail to see things from their perspective? It is heartbreaking to acknowledge that the trust placed in the Church has been severely damaged by scandals and abuses of power. To restore this trust, future ministers must be equipped not only with theological knowledge but also with compassion, honesty, and a firm commitment to creating a safer and more accountable Church.

One of the most valuable lessons I have gained from this course is the importance of critical thinking and self-awareness. It has challenged me to reflect on beliefs I once considered unquestionable and to recognize the biases I unconsciously held. This self-examination has led me to ask myself: Am I truly open-minded? Am I unconsciously judging others based on my own limited experiences? These reflections, though sometimes uncomfortable, are necessary. Failing to confront personal biases can contribute to a culture where injustice is ignored or, worse, hidden. A future minister must be willing to question assumptions, seek truth, and promote a culture of accountability and transparency.

Although this course has been challenging, it has been invaluable. As I move closer to becoming a friar and minister, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to engage with these complex but essential issues. This formation is not merely academic but transformative—it shapes the kind of minister I hope to become. More than ever, the Church needs leaders who are willing to acknowledge and address its shortcomings, who are committed to healing and restoration, and who can offer a message of love, mercy, and hope to a world that desperately needs it.

Studying human sexuality within the context of formation has reinforced a fundamental truth: effective ministry requires meeting people where they are. Being a priest is not about issuing commands or coercing others into belief; it is about walking alongside them, offering guidance and support, and creating a Church where all feel welcome—regardless of their struggles, identities, or past experiences. It is about fostering a culture of openness, where accountability is upheld, where abuse is never tolerated, and where survivors are always heard and believed.

As we celebrate the Jubilee of Hope, this commitment to renewal and healing becomes even more significant. The Jubilee is a time of reflection, transformation, and the restoration of hope within the Church. It is an opportunity for future ministers to embrace their calling with integrity and humility, ensuring that the Church remains a refuge of grace and redemption. Hope in the Church's future lies in its willingness to confront its past, to reform with sincerity, and to recommit to the sacred mission of love, justice, and mercy. By embracing these lessons now, we take a vital step toward building a Church that truly reflects the compassion and holiness to which it is called.

A Journey of Hope – From One Mission to Another, From Darkness to Light

Br. Alfiyando Syahnafi

When I first received my mission assignments in Cagait, Palawan, and Banaue, Ifugao, I saw them as opportunities to broaden my knowledge of Franciscan life and deepen my vocation and understanding of service. These were not ordinary missions. They were given to me as part of my regency period, a transitional stage in my journey from Dominican life to Franciscan life. It was a time of rediscovering my calling, filling in the gaps between where I had been and where God was leading me. At first, I had many questions: Would I be able to adapt? What lessons awaited me? Would I find my place? Little did I know that these experiences would transform me in ways I never expected.

The Mission in Cagait, Palawan: Learning Simplicity and Faith

When I first set foot in Cagait, I never imagined how much it would change me. Coming from a structured life in Jakarta, Indonesia, where everything was accessible and comfortable, I suddenly found myself in a remote mission station with no electricity, a limited water supply, and an entirely different way of life. The isolation was challenging, but it was also here that I learned what it truly meant to live in simplicity and faith. My two months in Cagait taught me to be more grateful for both the blessings and the hardships that life brings.

My time in Cagait was an invaluable experience—one that nothing else could replace. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have lived there. The breathtaking natural beauty—the islands, mountains, and sea—made me realize how small I am in the grand scheme of the universe and how great God is in His marvelous creation. Every day, from sunrise to sunset, I witnessed the wonder of Cagait's landscape.

However, it was not just nature that amazed me; the Tagbanua people of Cagait deepened my understanding of God's goodness. They are simple in every aspect—their way of life, their possessions, their knowledge, and even their faith. They live in humble homes, small huts made of woven wood. Their lives are not burdened by the pursuit of wealth; they seek only their daily sustenance, never hoarding unnecessary things. In terms of faith, they are still far from fully grasping the Catechism and teachings of the Catholic Church, and the presence of the Franciscans has been instrumental in enriching their understanding of Christianity.

Interacting with the Tagbanua people is something I am truly thankful for. They welcomed me wholeheartedly, making me feel loved and accepted despite my limited ability to speak Tagalog. Their warmth made my experience even more joyful. With them, I shared conversations, laughter, and walks around the island. We ventured into the forests, sailed the seas and rivers, enjoyed the beauty of Cagait, learned how to row boats, hunted for food, and prayed together. These moments filled our hearts with joy.

However, I regret that my interaction with them came late. At first, I struggled to connect due to the language barrier and my own hesitations. It took me six weeks to finally gather the courage to truly

engage with them, and in those last two weeks, I felt something I never expected—I felt at home. I regret not reaching out to them sooner, but this experience taught me an important lesson: mission is not just about what we do for others; it is about allowing ourselves to be transformed by those we serve.

The Mission in Banaue, Ifugao: Embracing Community and Growth

From Cagait, my journey took me to Banaue, a mission that was entirely different yet equally meaningful. When I first arrived at Immaculate Conception Mission Parish, where I would be staying, I was greeted by the breathtaking sight of a small town nestled in the mountains. The residents were lively and actively engaged in their daily routines. The parish was near the market and school, creating a dynamic and bustling environment—a stark contrast to the remote and isolated mission station in Cagait, where there were no schools, markets, or a large population.

In Banaue, the vibrant daily life was further enriched by the stunning mountain views. From my window, I could see rice terraces, houses perched higher than the parish, mist and clouds drifting close by, and the constant, soothing sound of the river. Words cannot fully capture the beauty of Banaue—it is something my eyes witnessed and my heart has engraved in memory.

In Banaue, I saw how a well-established parish could thrive when deeply rooted in the community. The active involvement of the youth and the people significantly contributed to the parish's growth. Communication was easier here, as many residents spoke English well. Determined not to repeat my mistake in Cagait, I immediately engaged with the people. Thankfully, the youth helped me break through my initial shyness.

The faith of the people in Banaue was stronger compared to the Tagbanua people, due to the long-standing presence of the Church. Their dedication to God deeply inspired me, especially those living in the hard-to-reach barrios. They devoted their time to attending Mass without hesitation, willingly taking on difficult journeys through mountains and rough terrain just to be present. Hiking along these steep paths became a regular part of my weekends as I assisted the friars in bringing the Eucharist to these remote communities.

A Journey of Transformation and Calling

These two missions—Cagait and Banaue—became defining moments in my journey. They were not just places I visited; they were places that shaped me. I began as someone hesitant and uncertain about his ability to connect, but I emerged with newfound confidence in my mission. More importantly, I found where I truly belonged. Through these experiences, I found myself, my happiness, and my God in the people I encountered.

My transition from Dominican life to Franciscan life was not merely about changing habits or communities—it was a deeper calling to embrace a spirituality that resonated with my heart. The Franciscan way of life, rooted in humility, simplicity, and closeness to the poor, allowed me to see the Gospel come alive in a new way. Through the struggles of mission work, the challenges of adapting, and the love of the people who welcomed me, I discovered that I was at home in this life.

As we celebrate the Jubilee Year of Hope, I am reminded that our faith journey is always one of trust and surrender. Hope is not about knowing exactly where we are going but about believing that God is leading us somewhere meaningful. It is the assurance that even in struggles, something greater is unfolding. I have seen this hope in the faces of the Tagbanua people, in the warmth of the youth in Banaue, and in my own transformation.

In the end, I hold onto one truth: "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?" And so, my journey continues, with hope as my guide and this song in my heart—a song that I composed as an offering of trust and surrender to God's will. It is a song that speaks of my journey from fear to faith, from uncertainty to peace, from searching to finding my true home in Him.

Living as a Human: A Pilgrim of Hope

Br. Pius Salai Zaw Paing

From the moment a child is born, he/she depends on their parents for love, care, and support. They need their parents to meet their basic needs and provide a safe environment. As the child grows, he/she observe other children playing with toys he/she doesn't have and naturally desires those toys. He/she might cry to ask for them, and sometimes others lend him/her what he/she wants. However, as the child matures, his/her parents can no longer fulfill every wish. This transition reflects a deeper truth: as humans, our goals and desires cannot always be satisfied by others. They are shaped by the internal forces of faith, hope, and love.

Throughout my life, I have had many dreams—some forgotten, some realized, and others abandoned. A memorable example is my matriculation exam. Passing that exam wasn't just an academic milestone—it was a step toward securing a future. In my community, passing the exam was seen as a vital achievement, a way to ensure a better life. Though it wasn't the ultimate goal in my life, it was a dream I hoped to fulfill. The process of studying, praying, and trusting in God to help me succeed made the accomplishment more meaningful. It wasn't just the outcome but the hope that sustained me through the challenging times that made it significant.

When I was younger, I dreamed of becoming a singer, a doctor, or an engineer. Yet, none of these dreams came to fruition. I never pursued them seriously. Perhaps they weren't the right path for me, or maybe I was not prepared for the challenges that these careers would have demanded. Ultimately, these dreams were left behind as I focused on different goals.

However, hope remains with me, and I believe they will continue to guide me for the rest of my life. The most significant of these is my vocation. I joined the Franciscan community in Myanmar, initially motivated by curiosity and the desire to learn, to wear the habit, and to experience community life. But over time, I realized that such motivations alone couldn't sustain me. I needed a deeper hope—a hope rooted in my faith, grounded in God's calling.

In this Jubilee Year, the theme "Pilgrims of Hope" resonates deeply with me. As a pilgrim, my journey is not just about the destinations I hope to reach, but about the hope that sustains me through every step. This hope is not abstract; it is concrete, built on daily acts of faith, trust, and love. It is the hope that God will guide me to fulfill my vocation, to become the person He has called me to be. This hope gives me strength when challenges arise and inspires me to keep moving forward, even when the path is unclear.

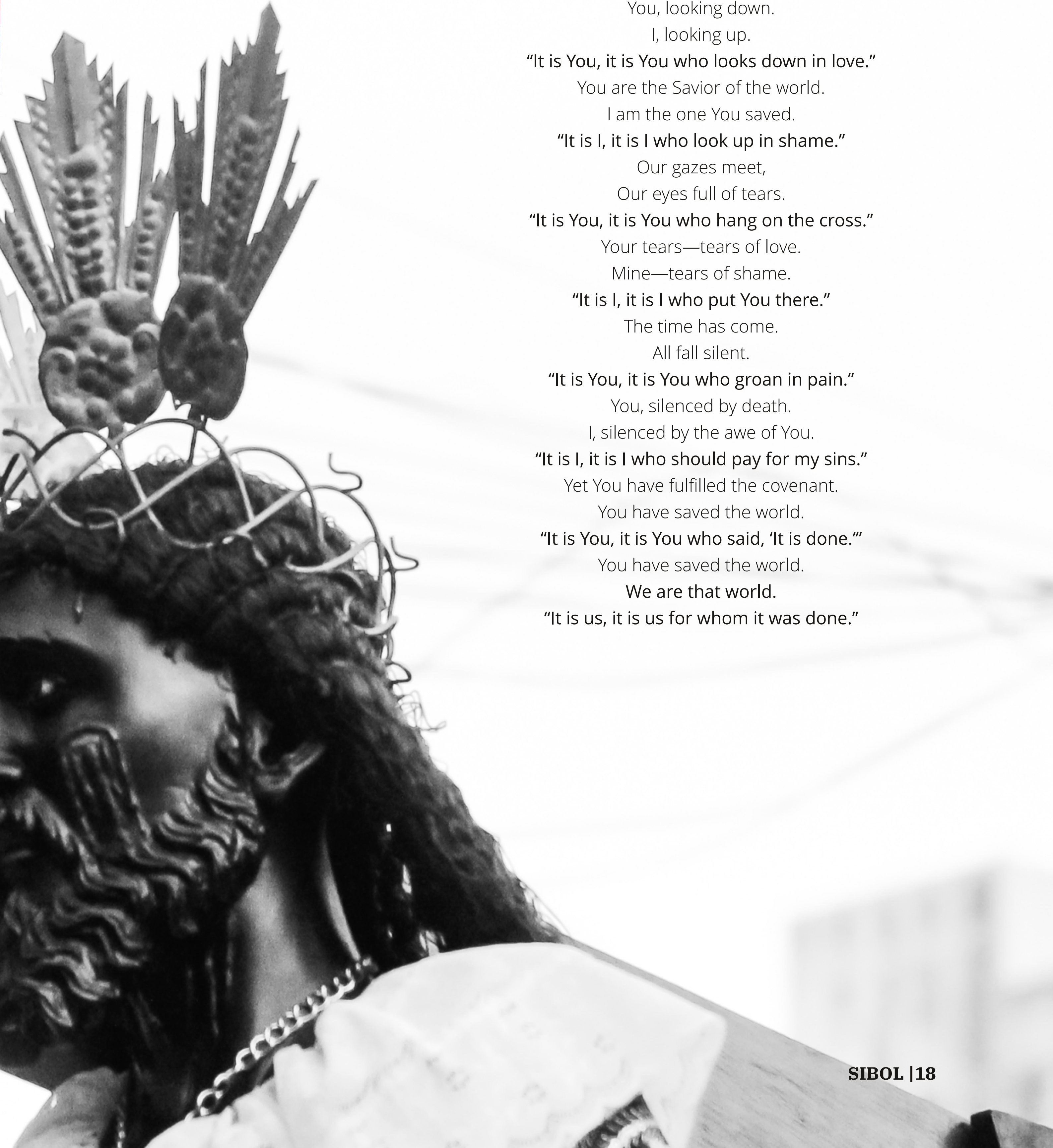
Hope, in the context of my life, is not just a fleeting desire or wish. It is a trust in God's promises and the belief that He will help me realize my deepest aspirations—both spiritual and personal. It is the foundation that keeps me grounded in my vocation, even when the initial motivations fade away. Through prayer, reflection, and the example of the saints, I am reminded that hope is not passive. It is an active force that compels me to continue pursuing my goals with perseverance and faith, confident that God is leading me on this pilgrimage.

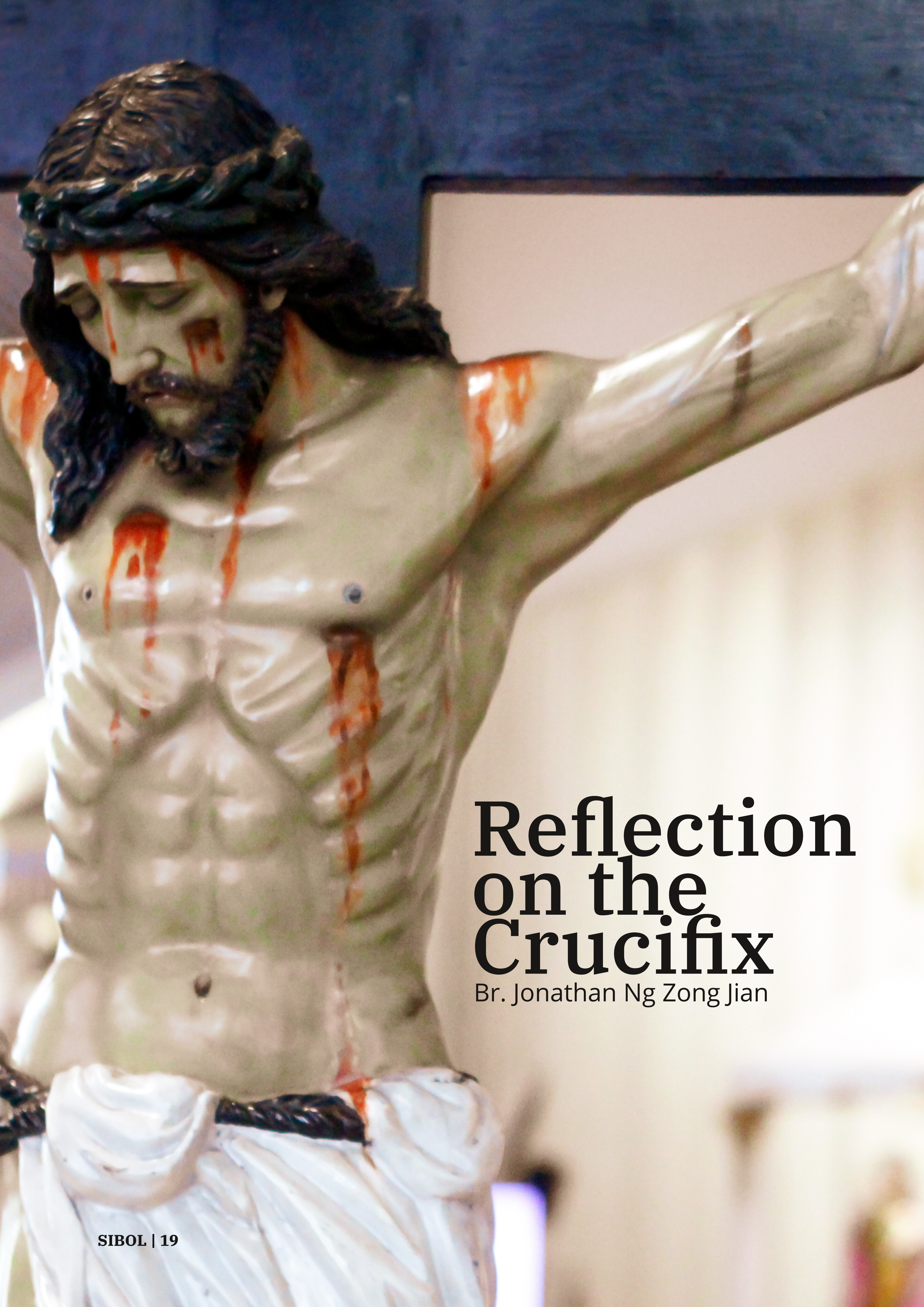
As I continue my journey, I pray that God will renew and strengthen my hope, so that I may fulfill the dreams He has placed in my heart and live out my vocation with a sense of purpose and conviction. This hope is not just for this life, but for eternity, anchored in the hope of the resurrection and the fulfillment of God's promises.

At the Foot of the Cross

Br. Jonathan Ng Zong Jian

At the Foot of the Cross
You, looking down.
I, looking up.
“It is You, it is You who looks down in love.”
You are the Savior of the world.
I am the one You saved.
“It is I, it is I who look up in shame.”
Our gazes meet,
Our eyes full of tears.
“It is You, it is You who hang on the cross.”
Your tears—tears of love.
Mine—tears of shame.
“It is I, it is I who put You there.”
The time has come.
All fall silent.
“It is You, it is You who groan in pain.”
You, silenced by death.
I, silenced by the awe of You.
“It is I, it is I who should pay for my sins.”
Yet You have fulfilled the covenant.
You have saved the world.
“It is You, it is You who said, ‘It is done.’”
You have saved the world.
We are that world.
“It is us, it is us for whom it was done.”





Reflection on the Crucifix

Br. Jonathan Ng Zong Jian

Crucifixes come in many forms, created from various materials, varying in size, in grayscale or full color. Some depict Christ dead, others risen or still dying, whether hung above an altar or carried on a rosary in our pockets. Each of these representations is meant to reflect Christ's sacrifice for humanity. Among all these images, one particular depiction stands out to me: the crucifix where Christ is still, His eyes sunken from the weight of judgment, humiliation, scourging, and the immense physical toll of carrying the cross and being nailed to it.

In this image, Christ is nearing death with every passing moment. His head hangs almost lifeless, and His body is drained of strength, exhausted from blood loss and suffering. This scene, frozen in time and captured in the form of a crucifix, is undeniably morbid, revealing the cruelty and violence of men. Yet, through the lens of faith, we understand that it is also an act of supreme love, undertaken for the salvation of the world.

What is striking about this moment is the juxtaposition of the suffering and determination fueled by love. Christ's body, nailed to a cross set intentionally high on a hill for all to see, becomes the focal point of the crowd's gaze. The people around the cross look up at Him—some in shame, others in fear, contempt, or sadness—helpless to offer assistance.

At the same time, as we look up at Christ, He looks down at us. Despite the overwhelming pain coursing through His body and the energy slowly leaving Him, His head slumped and His strength waning, Christ's posture offers Him the perfect vantage point to see all those around Him: those who crucified Him, those who hated Him, those who loved and followed Him. Even with the little strength remaining in His body, He fixes His loving and merciful gaze upon all of us. Driven by an unyielding love, He gazes at us with every ounce of His being, even as He moves closer to His death.

"Lord, You gave us Your all. To look lovingly upon us —a simple act made almost impossible by the sheer agony You endured—yet, through sheer determination and the love You have for us, You gazed."

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The Desire to Work: A Franciscan Perspective

Br. James Thang San Mung

Work is an essential aspect of human existence, deeply rooted in both the spiritual and practical dimensions of life. St. Francis of Assisi, in his testament, emphasizes the value of labor, stating, “I worked with my own hands” and “I have a desire to work.” These words not only reflect St. Francis’s commitment to a humble, self-sufficient life, but also point to the broader spiritual understanding of work as an integral part of human participation in God's creation. In the context of my formation as a Franciscan, I have come to recognize the profound significance of this teaching and the desire to contribute to society through meaningful labor.

During my postulancy formation, I had the opportunity to participate in a work exposure program, which allowed me to experience the reality of working outside of the formation setting. Prior to this, my work had largely been confined to the internal workings of religious life, where the focus is on prayer, study, and spiritual formation. The exposure to external work in a secular setting, such as my role as an office staff member at the University of Manila, was a transformative experience. This work, though not physically demanding, provided invaluable lessons about the nature of labor and its role in human dignity.

In St. Francis’s view, work is not merely a means of survival, but a way to participate in God’s ongoing act of creation. It is through work that we contribute to the world around us and serve the needs of others. This perspective resonates deeply with my own experience in the workplace, where I was able to see firsthand how essential work is to the lives of individuals and communities. Although my position in the registrar's office was not particularly challenging, it gave me the opportunity to witness the kindness and cooperation of my coworkers, who showed me the value of collaboration and service. Through these interactions, I gained a deeper understanding of the ways in which work can foster relationships and build a sense of community.

Furthermore, work exposes us to the realities of the world, particularly the struggles of those who work under challenging conditions. While my experience at the university was relatively comfortable, it prompted me to reflect on the lives of workers who endure difficult labor in harsh environments, often without the recognition or support they deserve. This reflection led me to a deeper empathy for those who labor tirelessly to support their families and contribute to society, often facing significant hardships.

In light of St. Francis’s teaching and my own experiences, I have come to understand that work is a calling and a responsibility, not just for personal gain, but for the greater good of the Church and society. It is through work that we serve others, particularly the poor, and contribute to the building of God’s Kingdom on earth. As I continue my formation as a Franciscan, I am reminded that work is a means of expressing love for others and for God, by using the talents and abilities God has given me for the benefit of others.

In conclusion, the desire to work, as articulated by St. Francis, is a deeply spiritual vocation. Work is not merely an activity for personal sustenance, but a way to engage with the world and to serve others in love. As I reflect on the words of St. Francis and my own experiences, I am reminded of the importance of approaching work with humility and a deep sense of purpose. In doing so, we participate in God’s creative work and fulfill our calling as Franciscan followers of Christ.

A Journey of Work and Hope

Br. Columban Nbau Bum Mung Hkai Yaw

Before starting my work exposure, I was anxious. Having never worked outside my community, I felt uncertain about what to expect. However, my four years as a boarding master at Kachyi Htu parish helped ease my fears. Reflecting on my past experiences, I realized they were more challenging than my current work exposure, which gave me confidence to embrace this new journey with hope.

With friends, I searched for job opportunities and was hired on the spot at a hair-cutting shop near Frisco, filling me with joy. Our search continued, and John and I secured jobs at a car wash shop, though our Filipino friend was not accepted. Despite this setback, I remained hopeful, trusting that God had a plan for each of us.

Our first week at the car wash shop began on November 5, 2024. Initially, I hesitated to join John, but he convinced me. Though I had aspired to be a professional hairdresser, I set that aside to accompany him. We eagerly learned new skills, engaged with coworkers and strangers, and formed strong bonds. Our employers were generous, offering us free Wi-Fi, food, and water. I witnessed God's love in our shared experiences, realizing that fraternity and kindness reflect the spirit of hope.

During the second and third weeks, we received lower-than-expected salaries, which disappointed us. However, I reminded myself that our goal was to gain experience, not just money. Returning to our formation house, I noticed how exhausted my fellow brothers were. Our community life suffered as we no longer prayed or shared meals as before, and I personally struggled with prayer. Yet, even in moments of fatigue and doubt, I held on to hope, trusting that God was guiding me.

By the final week, John and I were drained from long hours of work, yet I remained grateful for the opportunity. As the work exposure ended, I felt a renewed sense of purpose, reconnecting with my brothers and sharing our experiences. This journey was not just about labor—it was about discovering God's grace in every challenge.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, I realize that hope is not mere wishful thinking but a trust in God's providence. Through my work exposure, I learned that hope sustains us in difficulties, strengthens our perseverance, and leads us closer to Him. Despite struggles, I trust in God's faithfulness, knowing that He is always present, guiding, protecting, and filling me with His grace. With this renewed spirit, I continue my journey, embracing the future with faith and unwavering hope.

Finding God in the Grind: How a Month as a Waiter Deepened My Vocation

Br. Jewel Ysmile De Leon

The journey of discernment is never without struggles. During my aspirancy stage, I faced significant challenges, particularly while considering my application for the next stage of formation. Among the Filipino postulants, I was the only one without prior work experience in the secular world. This lack of experience made me question my path, at times even contemplating leaving the seminary to seek employment and support my family. I often felt envious of my peers who had secured well-paying jobs and were able to provide for their loved ones. This internal struggle made it difficult to fully appreciate my time in the seminary.

Yet, in moments of doubt, I found strength through the prayers of my spiritual companions, my "prayer warriors," who have steadfastly supported me. Above all, I am deeply grateful to my parents, who continuously remind me that my vocation is a response to God's call, not an obligation to provide them with a comfortable life. They have wholeheartedly offered me to God, reinforcing my commitment to this path.

My month-long exposure as a waiter in a Chinese restaurant in Binondo became a transformative experience. Working six days a week, treated no differently from any other employee, gave me not only practical skills but also a deeper understanding of my vocation. During the first week, I found myself repeatedly thinking, Should I quit? What if I just resign? Wouldn't it be easier to find another job? But by the end of the experience, I emerged with gratitude and newfound clarity, carrying with me invaluable lessons that strengthened my resolve.

One of the most significant lessons I learned was the true essence of service. As a waiter, my primary responsibility was to ensure that customers felt welcomed and satisfied. This involved far more than simply taking orders and delivering food; it required attentiveness, empathy, and a sincere desire to help. There were moments when I encountered frustrated or impatient customers, and I quickly realized how essential it was to respond with patience and kindness. This experience mirrored my calling as a seminarian, where serving others is at the heart of my vocation. Just as I sought to create a positive dining experience for guests, I am called to cultivate an environment of love, hospitality, and care within the Church community. Each interaction in the restaurant reminded me that service is an expression of love—one that lies at the very core of my future ministry.

Working alongside my colleagues in the restaurant also reinforced the importance of relationships. We operated as a team, relying on one another, especially during the busiest hours. My coworkers taught me techniques for efficiently taking orders, understanding routines, and adapting to the fast-paced environment. We shared stories, celebrated small victories, and supported one another through challenges. Though misunderstandings occasionally occur, our sense of camaraderie remains strong. This experience affirmed that community is essential —not just in the workplace but in the spiritual journey as well. Whether in ministry or daily life, strong relationships help us navigate difficulties and foster a sense of belonging.

The demanding nature of restaurant work also taught me the value of patience and resilience. There were moments when the kitchen was backed up, customers became particularly demanding, or long lines formed outside the restaurant on busy weekends. In those instances, I learned to remain calm and composed even when the situation felt overwhelming. I came to understand that patience is not merely about waiting—it is about maintaining a positive attitude, focusing on what I can control, and responding to frustration with a (Y)smile.

This experience led me to a profound reflection on my vocation. Every role, no matter how seemingly small, holds significance in serving others. Whether as a waiter or a future priest, I realized that every encounter is an opportunity to practice compassion, understanding, and humility—qualities essential for effective ministry. I found joy in simple acts of kindness, such as remembering a regular customer's favorite dish, offering extra soup without being asked, or providing chairs for those waiting for takeout. These small gestures reminded me that ministry often revolves around the little things: being present for someone in need, listening attentively, or offering words of encouragement. Moments of unexpected generosity, such as receiving tips from customers who recognized my efforts despite occasional mistakes, deepened my appreciation for genuine human connection.

My month as a waiter was not just a temporary job—it was a deeply enriching experience that strengthened my vocation. I gained insights into the importance of service, community, patience, and resilience, all of which will guide me as I continue my journey toward religious life. This experience has equipped me with practical skills while deepening my commitment to serving others with love and compassion.

As I move forward in my studies and spiritual formation, I carry these lessons with me, ready to embrace whatever challenges lie ahead. In light of the Jubilee of Hope, my experience takes on an even deeper meaning. The Jubilee is a time of renewal, a reminder that every moment—no matter how difficult—can lead to transformation and growth. It is a call to embrace hope, to trust in the process of formation, and to believe that even the most unexpected experiences can bring us closer to God. Just as my time in the restaurant shaped me in ways I never anticipated, so too does God work through every aspect of our lives, leading us toward His greater purpose.

In the end, I have come to understand that hope is not merely about waiting for something better—it is about finding God in the present moment, even in the grind of daily life. Whether serving food to customers or ministering to a congregation, every act of service is an opportunity to reflect Christ's love. This is the essence of my vocation, and it is with renewed hope that I continue walking this path.

Creation Proclaims! “Spes Non Confundit”

Br. Julius Cesar Macalit

Way back from its founder, the Franciscan tradition holds a profound love for the creation. For the Franciscans, creation is the tangible presence of God. St. Francis referred to trees, stones, water, soil, flowers, fire, wind, birds, fish, dogs, and worms, including man and whatever man can perceive, as God's creation. They are vestiges where one can reflect the image and beauty of its creator. St. Bonaventure, a Franciscan scholar, further argued that “since the university of things is the stairway to ascend into God; and among things, there is a certain vestige, a certain image, certain corporal things, certain spiritual things, certain temporal things, certain eternal things... it is proper, that we enter into our mind, which is an eternal image of God, spiritual and within us, and this is to step in the truth of God.” In Laudato Si, Pope Francis expresses that “creation is a gift from God to us by which through creation leads us to perceive the greatness of God and His love for His creatures.” Hence, it is inevitable for one to recognize the existential manifestation of God dwells in the creation. An old dictum would say, “natura de deo loquitor,” which in English translation means “nature speaks of God," that whatever perceivable objects, animate or unanimated, in the eyes of men speak about God. It provides a path for us to live in his presence.

Last December 21, 2024, I had the privilege of visiting a well-known tree park in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon. The place, as the locals call “The Bukidnon Tree Park,” offers undeniably beautiful sceneries that I can't see in the place where I am currently living. I was amazed by the verdant trees, newly bloomed luxuriant flowers, and green grasses I could see, smell, and freely touch. It was even surprising to see

some winged insects like butterflies, moths, and dragonflies that we seldom see nowadays. It was truly a fascinating place that I can't help but praise and thank God for its magnificent creation. But while I was roaming around the park, it suddenly came to my mind, one emerging reality outside the place. The Bukidnon Tree Park may be part and parcel of the creation as it shows a healthy and ideal environment, but the creation as a whole is in a state of degradation. It is suffering from man's tactless behavior and indifference. It is becoming now "subject to dissolution and death, aggravated by the human abuse of nature." From that moment on, it stopped me from appreciating the beauty of the place, and I found myself in the corner under the shade of the tree. I was filled with questions, doubts, and anxiety because of the uncertainties of the future. I remember vividly my own experience of nature's destructive response when Quezon City, particularly Frisco, was flooded last July 24, 2024, to be exact, because of unrelenting rain as a result of climate change. I witnessed how numerous houses were washed away by the flood, and many people climbed up to the roof as the water increased unstoppably. Many families were evacuated because of the tropical storm. It was indeed an awakening experience for me to ponder on what Pope Francis reiterated about climate emergence. The disaster now is becoming more catastrophic primarily because of man's inconsiderate activities and selfishness towards nature. It still moves me to think of that gruesome occurrence that could have been prevented if we just heeded the call of our predecessors to be mindful of the ecology as a whole, which includes the human and environmental ecology.

After some moments of in-depth reflection, I found myself in the middle of a quiet place with a heavy heart and anxious mind. Then suddenly, I heard the sound of the air gently whispering into my ears and felt its chilling breeze as if proclaiming "spes non confundit.". There is still hope. Pope Francis's declaration of the Jubilee year is a testament that vindication has not come in our midst. The present condition of the Creation may seem too despairing and irreparable; creation says otherwise. Hope is alive. The 8th centenary celebration of the Canticle of Creatures composed by St. Francis would convey to all people of goodwill to continue hope in the Lord for God does not disappoint. Immediately, my enthusiasm has come back to life. I was filled with hope, joy, and an inspired outlook as I continued wandering around the park. Accordingly, this personal reflective experience in the creation has urged me to contribute in my meager way to preserve and take care of what we still have. As creation enables Francis to live constantly in the presence of the Most High, we too can live and proclaim "spes non confundit.".

Hoping against all Hope in the Midst of the Climate Emergency

Br. Jc Quirong

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report three years ago released climate models that say that in order for the global temperature to not exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, global greenhouse gas emissions must start to go down by 2020-2025.

It is now 2025.

The Oxford State of the Climate 2024 Report tells us that carbon dioxide levels are at an all-time high, with the world having 40 gigatons of CO2 equivalent emissions for the first time in history. 2024 has become the warmest year since 1850. The last ten years (2014-2024) have also been the warmest ten years on record as well. On July 22 2024, the daily global average temperature reached 17.16°C, another record. 2024 has also been the first year with an average temperature exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, which was the threshold then set by the Paris Agreement.

We definitely have not done enough. We are even far from half way.

The statistics and data might seem a little too abstract for us to grasp the severity of the situation, but the implications of these developments should make us more distraught and hopeless. Projections from the IPCC report and the National Inquiry on Climate Change estimate that around 1 billion people would be at risk to climate hazards due to coastal flooding and sea level rise in 30 years. This meant that 832 municipalities and 25 cities in the Philippines are under the threat of loss of life and property. Continued climate change will also affect agriculture, fisheries and indigenous populations, locking them in poverty due to more expenses related to adapting to calamities and changes in harvest and productivity. The irreversible effects of climate change on forests, peatlands and permafrost also denudes the earth's natural capacity to reduce global warming, thus making our efforts to stop this crisis more unattainable in the future. Much progress that many ministries in the church have done as well in the field of climate adaptation would also be reversed or be made ineffective due to projected extreme weather changes if things do not change. We have all of these projections from our scholars and scientists and yet we still see no change. Honestly, I think we are on the brink of societal collapse coming within this century.

Reviewing the literature on the climate crisis makes

me always wonder why I decided to apply to the Franciscans and undergo formation (secluding myself from the world) when time is running out to do something. I could have worked in organizing or in climate advocacy, and yet I chose to go to Francis and knock at the door of his spiritual children.

I chose to follow God's call.

I think I knew deep down that God is all powerful and that I am nothing. If there would be salvation for the groans of the earth, it will come from Him. Not me. "The Lord will fight for you; you have only to keep still." (Exodus 14:14, NABRE)

I choose to cling to the hope of His promise. That He will not leave us and that His might and His power will ultimately be triumphant despite how bleak the situation is. Many of my ideas are drawn from the inspiration of political theologians that have influenced me. Upon reading them I was reminded of the hope of Abraham, "a hope against hope."

He believed, hoping against hope... He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body [already] dead... He did not doubt God's promise in unbelief; rather, he was empowered by faith and gave glory to God. (Romans 4:18-20, NABRE)

The might of God's power is beyond human understanding. Our thoughts are not His thoughts and our ways are not His (Isaiah 55:8). But clinging to this hope should not be blind, idle and complacent optimism. We should not wait for salvation to come falling from the sky. We could see that Abraham was "empowered" when he was clinging to hope. He was active. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, who were under hopeless times of persecution when he evoked the hope of Abraham. It was a call to continue the fight, to hold the line and continue the work of evangelization and the building of Christian communities. The hope given to the people of Moses in Exodus did not leave them complacent and inactive, it was a call towards active following of God's command, which resulted not in the status quo of the Egyptian empire, but in the overturning of societal structures.

I still continue to hold on to this hope. And I continue to pray that God would show us the way as a community towards salvation.

The Friars Passing Over and the Hope of Eternal Life

Br. Julius Cesar Macalit

Praised be to You our Sister Bodily Death.

Some, if not all, perceive death as the ultimate conclusion of human existence. It connotes that after earthly dwelling, whether you live your life to the fullest or in despair, each individual will expire at his/her own respective time. An old dictum would say it is the only thing guaranteed in life. Its probability of happening is warranted. In other words, death is inescapable. It is an unextinguishable reality that man faces. However, should this unalterable reality cause fear and withdrawal from enjoying and employing our time and energies to worthwhile and lucrative undertakings since, in the end, we will pass like a shadow? Or shall we start exploring nature's beneficial power and gathering treasures of the earth to the point of destruction to avoid death and attain eternal life? St. Francis of Assisi thinks death distinctively. His biographer speaks about how Francis uniquely looks at death and even calls it a "sister". In his highly celebrated work entitled "Canticle of Creatures," whose 8th Centenary will be celebrated this year, he wrote, "Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no living can escape."1 Celano recounts, "Francis spent the last few days before his death praising the Lord and teaching; he likewise invited all creatures to praise God and exhorted them to love God."

Like St. Francis, the remaining days of Friars Hermie, Ricky, and Jerome were spent praising God by living out their vocation. They have fulfilled their promise and met their Sister death while on a mission. Bro. Hermie died in Culion, Palawan, suffering a myocardial infarction (heart attack) because of exhaustion from the medical mission. But before that, Bro. Hermie spent most of his time taking care of the sick friars in the Riete House since he went back to the Philippines from his missionary post in Libya. Bro. Hermie died serving the Lord through the ill and poor communities in Culion, Palawan. Another friar who will be missed surely is Fr. Ricky. He used to be our formator when we were still in OLAS. He's known for his smile and humor whenever we see him in the seminary corridor. Fr. Ricky spent his last moments administering sacrament in his hometown in Tabuk, Kalinga. But like, bro. Hermie, Fr. Ricky died as well of myocardial infarction. But the most saddening about their death is that, they both showed no symptoms of such disease. They passed away like a snap. Lastly, bro. Jerome, the friar who left a lasting impact on my Franciscan formative journey, died just a day after the burial of Fr. Ricky. Albeit, bro. Jerome was diagnosed with a chronic comorbidity prior to his last hospitalization. He remained faithful to his Franciscan vocation. He obeyed and accepted the position assigned to him as a guardian of the community in Donsol, Sorsogon. Bro. Jerome never demanded from the order despite having done so much to the community. Instead, his vows of poverty, obedient and chastity exemplified all the more and the love for his vocation and to the community remained until breathing out his last and final breath.

The passing of these three good and faithful friars and other friars who passed away while on mission is indeed a reminder for us, formandees, to be faithful and remain steadfast to the life we chose to embrace. The Franciscan way of life is a life of mission and service for God through his people. And some of us, perhaps, would say they should have lived longer to reach out to more missionary endeavors. This may be true yet; they may have spent their lives shortly but left a remarkable life as friar minors. Like St. Francis, who died at the age of 44, his contributions to the church and the world are undisputable. Thus, the friars passing over from this life is not ultimately the end. They just traversed from earthly life to eternal existence. The Peace Prayer attributed to St. Francis expressed "that it is in dying that we're born to eternal life". Sister death is leading them to the hope of life everlasting as promised and fulfilled by Jesus himself in his resurrection. Surely, this hope of eternal life didn't disappoint them as they lived their lives pleasing to God. Friars Hermie, Ricky and Jerome are testament to being a Franciscan friar, poor, mendicant living in the contemporary period.

Pagpupuri ng Isang Magsasaka

Br. Renz Adrian Ronda

Likhang sining para sa '8th Centenary -
Canticle of Creatures by St. Francis of Assisi'
Orihinal na likha sa pagpupugay para sa
mga magsasaka ng Plaridel, Bulacan,

O luntiang sakahan,
lupaing kay sariwang pagmasdan,
buhay na tagumpay sa tuyong lupa
na sa anihan makikita.

O salamat, kapatid na Araw;
sa matingkad at maamo mong mukha,
pinasasagana mga dahon at tangkay
upang masaganang ani, aking makamtan.

O salamat, kapatid na Buwan;
sa masigla mong liwanag sa madilim na kapaligiran.
Sapat na pamamahinga sa maghapong pakikibaka,
sa tulog na kay sarap sa tuwina.

O salamat, Inang Daigdig;
sa pagpapatuloy sa mga binhing aking inihasik.
Sa lupa mo'y sila'y namumutawi,
puno ng buhay, sabik na umusli.

O salamat, kapatid na Hangin;
sa sayaw mong tunay na kaakit-akit.
Mga punla't pananim, umiindayog sa musika mong giliw,
pati mga peste, naiwawasiwas, napupuwing.
O salamat, kapatid na Tubig;
pamatid-uhaw sa lalamunan at tuyong daigdig.
Pinapainom iyong mga ugat na sa iyo'y kumakapit,
nagdadala ng kaginhawaan sa aming mga pananim.

O salamat, kapatid na Ulap;
masayang nagtatakbuhan sa malawak na alapaap.
Sa minsang pagtakip sa matinding sikat ng araw,
sa minsang pagpatak ng ulan upang lupa'y maginhawaan.

O dakilang salamat sa Diyos na Maylikha,
sa bigay mong kapwa na aking kamukha.
Katuwang sa hardin ng iyong sanilikha,
kakuwentuhan, kabungisngisan, kapwa inspirasyon
sa buhay mong bigay na ikaw ang may akda.

Canticle of a Farmer

Br. Renz Adrian Ronda

A creative and inspirational piece in celebration of the 8th Centenary of the Canticle of Creatures by St. Francis of Assisi; written during the sectoral exposure to the farmers at Plaridel, Bulacan, March 2025.

Ever-green meadows,
Fields so fresh, so cool,
Life triumphs over barren land
When harvest season soon will come.
O thank you, brother Sun,
For the bright and warm array you shine,
To nourish the stem and leaves,
To make a fruitful yield.
O thank you, sister Moon,
For enlightening the night,
To rest from daylight's work,
To sleep and recover from what is lost.
O thank you, Mother Earth,
For receiving the seeds the sower sows,
To grow its shoots from the ground,
And sip the nutrients the land provides.
O thank you, sister Wind,
For the merry dance you make,
To carry the pollen and grain,
To drive pests away.
O thank you, sister Water,
For quenching dryness and thirst,
To provide drink for the roots,
To hold the power of the shoots.
O thank you, brother Cloud,
For the shade you provide,
To cover the field when heat strikes,
To pour rain when cracks till the land.
O thank you, Creator God!
For giving me brothers to till the ground,
To share the beauty of your creation,
To create memories, stories, laughter, and hardships a little lighter

Bokasyon:
Higit ka sa Pamilya

Br. Joery Abayon

Ang aking pamilya ang unang humubog sa aking pagkatao,
Sila ang nagturo ng pagpapahalaga, pakikitungo at respeto,
Pinanday ng aruga, dunong at gabay
Upang marunong magmahal, mangarap at magtagumpay.

Sa hirap at ginhawa pamilya ang sandigan
Sa bisig nila’y may ligtas na kanlungan,
Sa bawat pagkadapa, sila’y handang umalalay,
Umaalay hanggang maabot ang rurok ng tagumpay.

Ngunit mas pinili kong tumugon sa relihiyosong bokasyon
Sa layuning higit pa sa sariling intensyon,
Iniwanan ang tahanan, pangangalaga ng magulang
Upang maglingkod at sa iba’y maging katuwang.

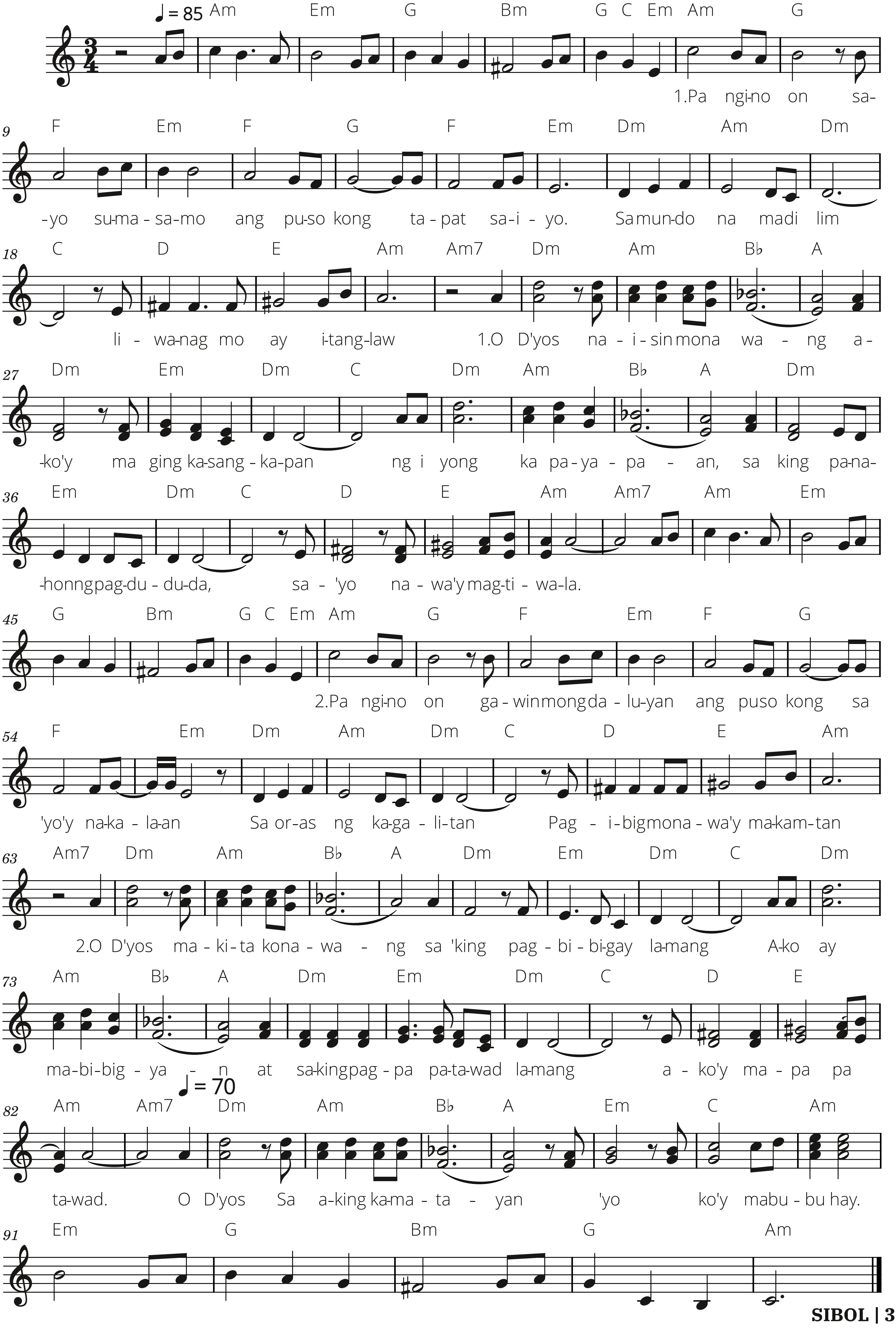
Bokasyon ang naging bagong tahanang kasama
Itatayo ang pangarap na maghahatid ng liwanag at pag-asa sa mga dukha at aba’,
Isinantabi ang tuwa at sariling ligaya
Pamilya’y mananatili sa gunita’t alaala.

Sa aking piniling bokasyon na puno ng pagsubok
Pag-asa ang s’yang hangad na sa puso’y tumutok,
Kahit napalayo sa kanlungan ng pamilya
Respeto, pagpapahalaga, pagmamahal at, pag-asa,
S’yang dala para sa lahat ng san-nilikha.

My family is the cornerstone of my life, of my vocation, they provide a loving and supportive environment, but I felt a deeper calling, a desire to dedicate my life to serving a higher purpose. The yearning to serve God has become an undeniable force, guiding me toward a life of religious commitment.

Kasangkapan ng Kapayapaan

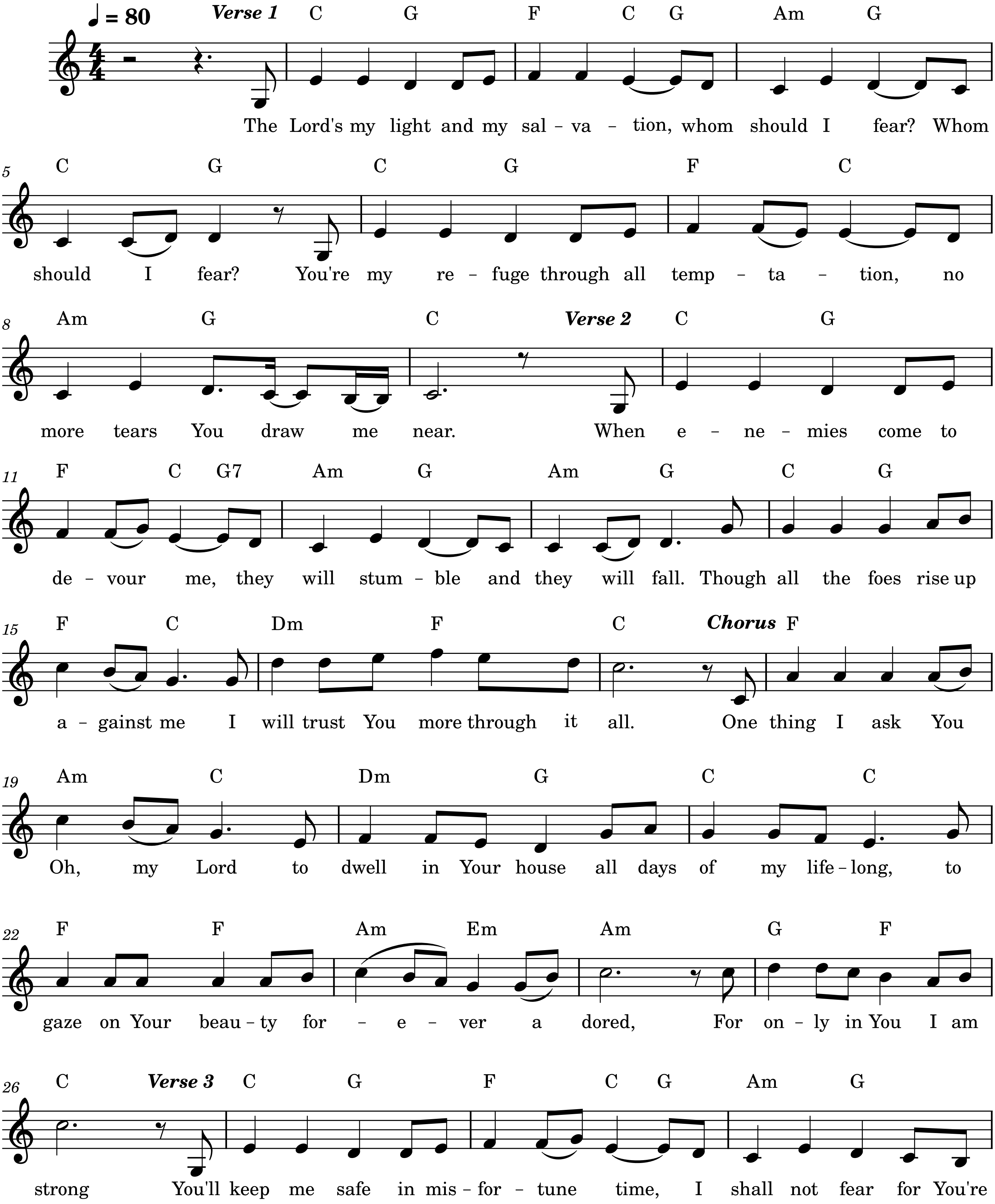
Postulancy 2024-2025

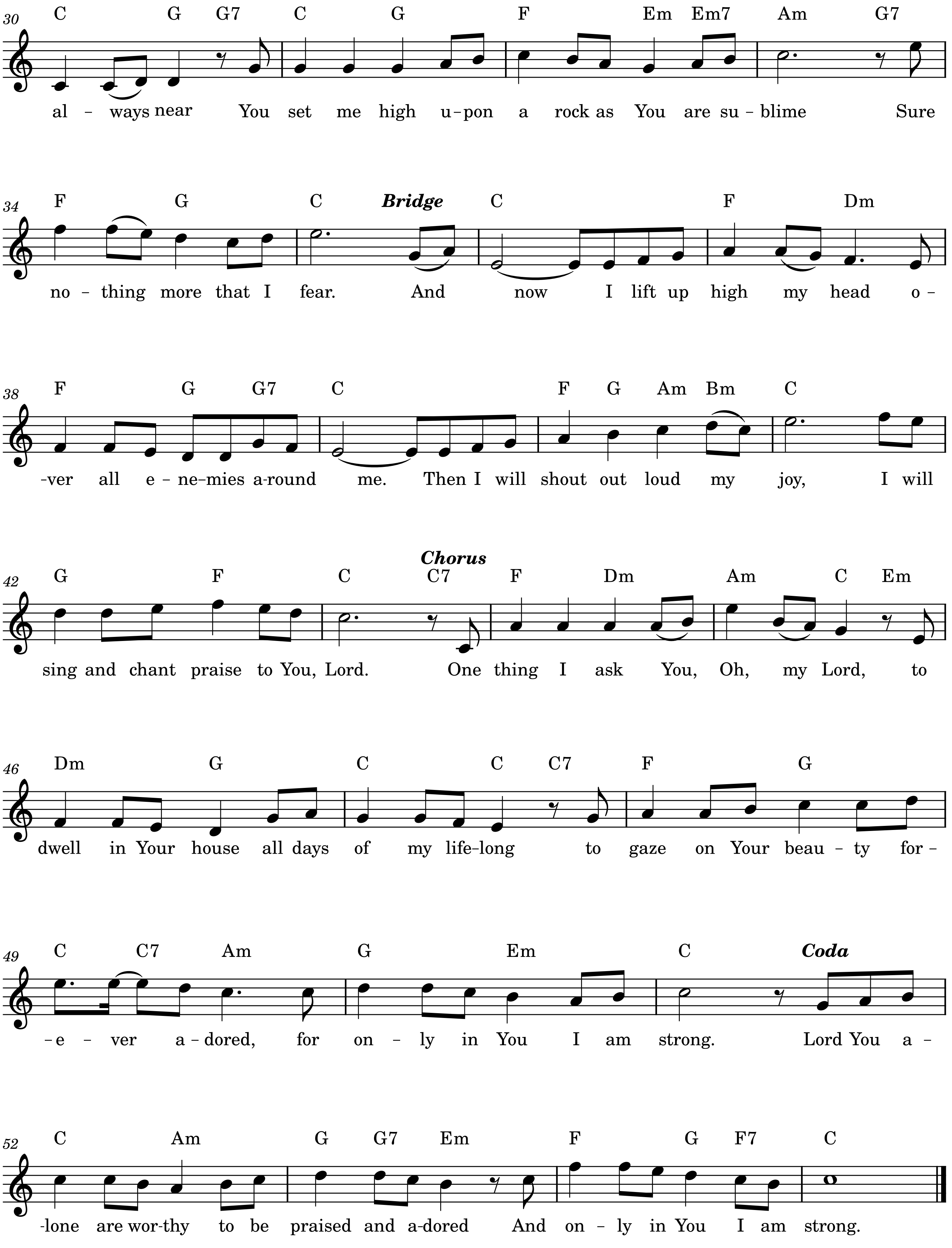

♩= 85
Am Em G Bm G C Em Am G
1.Pa ngi-no on sa-
9
F Em F G F Em Dm Am Dm
-yo su-ma - sa-mo ang pu-so kong ta - pat sa - i - yo. Sa mun-do na madi lim
18
C D E Am Am7 Dm Am B♭ A
li - wa-nag mo ay i-tang-law 1.O D'yos na - i - sin mo na wa - ng a -
27
Dm Em Dm C Dm Am B♭ A Dm
-ko'y ma ging ka-sang - ka-pan ng i yong ka pa - ya - pa - an, sa king pa-na-
36
Em Dm C D E Am Am7 Am Em
-hong pag-du - du-da, sa - 'yo na - wa'y mag-ti - wa-la.
45
G Bm G C Em Am G F Em F G
2.Pa ngi-no on ga - win mong da - lu-yan ang puso kong sa
54
F Em Dm Am Dm C D E Am
'yo'y na-ka - la-an Sa or-as ng ka-ga - li-tan Pag - i - big mo na - wa'y ma-kam-tan
63
Am7 Dm Am B♭ A Dm Em Dm C Dm
2.O D'yos ma - ki - ta ko na - wa - ng sa 'king pag - bi - bi-gay la-mang A-ko ay
73
Am B♭ A Dm Em Dm C D E
ma-bi-big - ya - n at sa king pag - pa pa-ta-wad la-mang a - ko'y ma - pa pa
♩= 70
82
Am Am7 Dm Am B♭ A Em C Am
ta-wad. O D'yos Sa a-king ka-ma - ta - yan 'yo ko'y mabu - bu hay.
91
Em G Bm G Am

Only in You I Am Strong

Based on Psalm 27:1-6

Lyrics & Music: A Gonzaga Alfiyando Syahnafi


♩ = 80
Verse 1
C G F C G Am G
The Lord's my light and my sal – va – tion, whom should I fear? Whom
5
C G C G F C
should I fear? You're my re – fuge through all temp – ta – tion, no
8
Am G C
more tears You draw me near.
Verse 2
C G
When e – ne – mies come to
11
F C G7 Am G Am G C G
de – vour me, they will stum – ble and they will fall. Though all the foes rise up
15
F C Dm F C
a – gainst me I will trust You more through it all.
Chorus
F
One thing I ask You
19
Am C Dm G C C
Oh, my Lord to dwell in Your house all days of my life – long, to
22
F F Am Em Am G F
gaze on Your beau – ty for – e – ver a dored, For on – ly in You I am
26
C
strong
Verse 3
C G F C G Am G
You'll keep me safe in mis – for – tune time, I shall not fear for You're


30
C G G7 C G F Em Em7 Am G7
al – ways near You set me high u–pon a rock as You are su – blime Sure
34
F G C Bridge C F Dm
no – thing more that I fear. And now I lift up high my head o –
38
F G G7 C F G Am Bm C
-ver all e – ne–mies a-round me. Then I will shout out loud my joy, I will
Chorus
42
G F C C7 F Dm Am C Em
sing and chant praise to You, Lord. One thing I ask You, Oh, my Lord, to
46
Dm G C C C7 F G
dwell in Your house all days of my life-long to gaze on Your beau – ty for –
49
C C7 Am G Em C Coda
–e – ver a – dored, for on – ly in You I am strong. Lord You a –
52
C Am G G7 Em F G F7 C
-lone are wor-thy to be praised and a-dored And on – ly in You I am strong.

San Pedro Bautista Postulancy '24-'25

SOJOURN: Journey Towards Solidarity
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Air
Water
Fire
Land

WORLD DAY OF CONSECRATED LIFE
CONSECRATED PERSONS

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Concepcion Uno,
Marikina City

Br. Jewel Ysmile L. De Leon
San Antonio, Nueva Ecija

Br. Joery P. Abayon
Dao, Capiz

Br. Julius Cesar C. Macalit
Libertad, Butuan City,
Agusan Del Norte

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Botolan, Zambales

Br. Ralph Harvey A. Malaga
Lian, Batangas

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Bariw, Camalig, Albay

Br. Ronaldo M. Arevalo
Nagcarlan, Laguna

Br. Charles Ko Ko Myint
Yangon, Myanmar

Br. Columban NBau Bum Mung Hkai Yaw
Kachin State,
Myanmar

Br. David Pau Sian Muan
Chin State, Myanmar

Br. James Thang San Mung
Chin State, Myanmar

Br. John Paul Inngar Kyaw
Magway Division,
Myanmar

Br. John Thang Kap Tuang
Chin State, Myanmar

Br. Pius Salai Zaw Paing
Magway Division,
Myanmar

Br. Alfiyando Syahnafi
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BR. ELIAS MANLANGIT, JR., OFM
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SAN PEDRO BAUTISTA POSTULANCY

FORMATION YEAR 2024-2025